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Police displaying arms and ammunition recovered from arrested militants at Sopore on Thursday. -Excelsior/Amin War

4 militants held for killing SPO

Imtiyaz Ahmad Kandoo alias Fayaz son of Abdul Khaliq of Kraltang Sopore and another HM militant Mehrajudin Halwai son of Abdul Khaliq Halwai of Khushalmato, Sopore, who had plans to kill at least 5 more Sarpanchs before Eid-ul-Fitr in Sangrama area of Sopore, North Kashmir.

Singh said that they had received orders from HM supreme Syed Salahudin to kill the Sarpanchs. "These orders are being passed through HM chief of the Valley Abdul Qayoom Najar alias Jan Sahib son of Abdul Ahad Najar of Mumkak, Sopore", he added.

The DIG said that Hizb Supremo, Syed Salahudin is desperate to destabilize Panchayat Raj Institutions in Kashmir valley. "The mass participation of people in country side in governance affairs has frustrated him and he has directed his cadres to harm members of Panchayat Raj Institutions by all means", he added.

"Serious efforts are on to neutralize the Hizb network active in North Kashmir areas of Handwara, Sopore, Naidkhai and Palhalan to ensure peace", Singh said.

The DIG said that police with the help of 52 Rashtriya Rifles and 22 RR apprehended the killers of SPO Mudasir Ahmad Dar on July 28 and those who attacked Sarpanch Khazir Mohammad Parray of Krankshivan, Sopore on July 26. Both these attacks were carried out last week in which the SPO died and Sarpanch was critically wounded.

The DIG said that based on the eye witness account during investigation, one of the accused Asif Ahmad Dar alias Ashmate son of Ghulam Hassan Dar of Mumkak, Sopore was arrested from his house during a raid and a pistol was recovered from him.

Singh said that on Dar's disclosure and as well as eye witness account one more accused Aqib Ahmad Mir alias Mohd Ramzan Mir of Khawaja Gilgit, Sopore was arrested and a pistol was recovered from his possession.

The police officer said that during investigation and questioning of the two accused, involvement of two more in the killing the SPO and attack on Sarpanch surfaced. "Both the

CBI raids at 3 places in Rs 4 cr

Bank of Baroda scam

amount, the new officials posted at Bank of Baroda sounded their top brass and formally a complaint was lodged with the CBI, which started investigations and unearthed the nexus between private persons and the Bank officials.

The CBI during investigations detected that such a fraud wouldn't have been possible without the involvement of the Bank officials as the documents produced by Manzoor Hussain were forged and fake. He had kept stamps in his house, which have been seized. He had used the stamps for making fictitious documents of land mortgage to secure the loan.

Sources said all fake docu-

ments used in procuring the loans have been seized from the bank authorities as well as Manzoor Hussain. During today's raid also, the CBI seized number of important and incriminating documents from the house of Manzoor, as well as Bank officials, some of whom have retired.

Sources said the CBI had obtained warrants from the court for conducting searches in the houses of private persons and the Bank officials.

A case against the accused has already been registered by the CBI. Further investigations would start after the scrutiny of seized documents. The accused would be called for questioning, they added.

5 foreign militants killed in Handwara forests

AK rifles and large quantities of ammunition and war like stores were recovered during the search operation. They said that the group had recently infiltrated from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) into Hafrooda forests of Handwara and was spotted after security forces received information about their presence in the forests.

"It was a group of around 5 that had infiltrated by the middle of July and one of the militants had received them and he was acting as a guide for the group. Five of them have been killed and search for the sixth one is going on", the sources said.

Sources identified two of the LeT commanders killed in the operation as Abdullah and Wahid. "All of them are foreigners and these two were the commanders as per the documents received from them", sources added.

Three Army personnel were injured, one of them critically, last night when the Army established contact with them first time since July 29 evening. The Army also fired back resulting in the gunbattle.

Sources said that the dead bodies of the militants were recovered during the search operation of the forest area. He said that the search operation is going on despite the freak weather.

Initially, Handwara police and 6 Rashtriya Rifles of Army launched an operation on July 29 and in the evening they established contact with the militants.

Heavy exchange of fire between militants and security forces in the evening of July 29 but in the morning on July 30 no militant was found in the area. The security forces recovered only some pouches

J&K Bank records 25 pc net profit

415.17 crores recorded during the corresponding period of the previous year.

The Earnings per share jumped to Rs 63.52 which is up (YoY) by 25.11 percent from Rs 50.77 recorded during the corresponding period of the previous year.

The Net Interest Margin (NIM) has appreciated to 4.15 percent from 3.84 percent recorded for the corresponding period of the previous year. The Return on Assets (RoA) has increased to 1.89 percent from 1.68 percent as recorded for the corresponding period of the previous year.

The Bank's net interest income increased by 22.27 percent YoY to Rs 654.90 crores during the quarter from Rs 535.63 crores earned during the corresponding period of the previous year.

The asset quality of the Bank remained stable as Gross NPAs stood 1.67 percent for the quarter. The net NPA ratio of the Bank stands at 0.14 percent, one of the best in the industry. The NPA coverage ratio is at 94.01 percent.

The total business of the Bank is up by 13.37 percent when compared with the corresponding period of the previous year.

The deposits grew by 10.32 percent for Q1 FY13-14 to stand at Rs 58601.09 crore as against Rs 53117.10 crore for Q1 FY 12-13. The advances have increased by 18.23 percent to Rs 39282.20 crores from Rs 33225.27 crores as recorded during the corresponding period of the previous year.

Antony reviews security scenario

in the State.

The violence levels have risen against the security forces as around 35 security personnel have been killed in the last seven months as compared to nine last year.

The meeting is also understood to have reviewed the

For first time, J&K to have comprehensive R&R policy

rehabilitation of tenants, who under the prevailing circumstances don't get even single penny despite losing their source of livelihood, sources disclosed.

There would also be provision under the R&R Policy for ensuring employment to the one mem-

Infiltration, security measures reviewed at high level meet

ber of the affected family in the project besides construction of colony for the affected populace in case of cluster relocation, they said. The policy would also take care of ensuring skill development of local youth and then their engagement in the projects particularly those in the power sector.

He directed the authorities of

and a rucksack.

More troops including 32 RR, 6 RR and 9 Para commandos of Army joined the operation on July 30 after the militants escaped from the encounter site of July 29 at Baila.

The GOC said that militants are desperately making attempts to infiltrate into Kashmir but army has intensified vigil along the Line of Control (LoC) and due counter infiltration grid the infiltration bids have been foiled.

In the meantime Army and Special Operation Group of Police (SOG) launched a massive operation in Lolab forests in North Kashmir's frontier district of Kupwara after inputs that new Jaish e Muhammad (JeM) Chief was hiding in the forest area.

Sources said that 18 Rashtriya Rifles, 28 RR, 47 RR, 9 Para, 4 Para of Army and SOG cordoned off the Saiwan, Malgund and Shahgund forest areas inputs that the new Jaish e Muhammad Commander Qari Obama along with his associates are hiding in the forest area.

Qari Obama has succeeded Qari Yasir who was killed in an encounter on July 23 last month at Lolab in North Kashmir's Kupwara district.

Meanwhile, sources said that intermittent firing has been reported from Kamalkote sector of Uri in North Kashmir's Baramulla district for last three days.

Army's 11 Madras has been firing intermittently following reconnaissance conducted by the militants on the LoC for possible infiltration. "One militant was injured in the Army's firing a day before when he was conducting reconnaissance near the LoC", sources added.

The Bank added 162 business units and around 300 ATMs to its expanding network across the State.

Meanwhile, the Bank shall continue to focus on the priority sector credit in the State, so as to give boost to the agriculture and allied activities and achieve the targets well in time.

Commenting on the performance for the quarter, Mushtaq Ahmad, Chairman and CEO of Jammu & Kashmir Bank, said "The first quarter results are healthy to sustain our growth momentum well into future despite the severely stressed economic conditions in the country. Our strategic focus on the potential sectors within the State economy will sharpen considerably to push our CD Ratio further up."

He said, "We feel encouraged by the results. As of now, we are streamlining our business policy, plan and processes following up with a multi-pronged approach i.e. total financial inclusion, vigorous business expansion, formulation of risk-based systems and procedures, consolidating processes of growth and most significantly building a capable and unmistakable work-force to meet the challenges of future banking."

"In terms of staff, the Bank shall keep pace with its fast expanding foot print across the country. We took a major stride in this direction by appointing 1050 Relationship Executives through a selection process quite in line with our recruitment policy", he added.

The violence levels have risen against the security forces as around 35 security personnel have been killed in the last seven months as compared to nine last year.

The meeting is also understood to have reviewed the

emerging security scenario in the region after the withdrawal of American troops from the Af-Pak region in 2014 and its impact.

The Defence Minister every month reviews the security situation with the three Services chiefs and NSA Shivshankar Menon. (PTI)

Terror incidents down; civilian, security forces killings up

Anantnag district, the Home Ministry said it has deployed 90 companies of additional Central Armed Police Forces to provide security to the pilgrimage.

"Adequate security arrangements as well as heavy deployment of security forces at base camps and enroute have been made to ensure incident free yatra," it added.

It said the Ministry of Home Affairs has launched a scheme named 'Special Industry Initiative' (SSI) for Jammu and Kashmir known as 'UDAAN' in the nature of partnership between the corporates of India and Ministry of Home Affairs.

Asserting that the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is implementing the scheme, the MHA revealed that 35 leading corporate houses have partnered with NSDC to train more than 54,000 youth from the State over next five years.

"The partners of 'UDAAN' included leading Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) like NTPC, BHEL, BSNL, ONGC, HAL and Canara Bank and private companies such as Wipro, TCS, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Bajaj Allianz, CMC, Cognizant, Yes Bank, Future Learning, IL&FS, CIL, Edusports, Religare, Accenture and TATA motors," it said, adding that training of 382 candidates has been completed under 'UDAAN', out of which 185 have been offered job while remaining candidates were under the process of placement.

The MHA said 18 corporates made 32 visits to Jammu and Kashmir and selected 1305 candidates for training.

It pointed out that Mr Shinde after taking over as the Home Minister decided to visit all border areas of the country. As a part of his exercise, he visited Leh and Kargil, bordering China and Pakistan in Ladakh region including forward Border Out Post of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) at Lukumbe along Indo-China border in Leh.

He referred to his meetings with Chief Executives of Leh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh and Kargil, Council members, top officials and prominent citizens for first hand account of the situation.

The MHA document also made a reference to his visit to Jammu and Kashmir including forward village of Suchetgarh in RS Pura sector, inspection of border fencing, inter-action with jawans guarding the border, Hazratbal shrine and Chakan-Da-Bagh in Poonch district.

It also made a mention of Mr Shinde reviewing security scenario in the State at the Unified Headquarters meeting in Srinagar.

The MHA documents said SVO books 10 PHE Engineers, others misappropriated by way of drawing bills against non-existent works, by preparing and drawing fraudulent bills of labour component and by not incurring expenditure as per approved action plan. The JSC revealed that a large scale misappropriation of funds has been taken place on the name of actual labour used for laying, dismantling and rethreading of G I pipes of various dias in addition to the use of schedule rates of 1997/2004 prevalent during the period of execution.

A test check of 50 number of estimate revealed that Rs 5,02,320/- were charged as inflated labour component in water supply scheme Kot 2nd for laying and dismantling of pipes of different diameters.

The JSC further revealed that Rs 2, 13,760/- have been shown charged for welding of pipes of different dias in the above mentioned schemes which did not prove on ground.

The Joint Surprise Check also revealed that in a test check of 39 estimates of Sumbliwala Scheme, Rs 2, 92,715/- have been charged as inflated labour component for laying, dismantling and rethreading of G I pipes of different diameter in the shape of labourers and fitters which are in excess to the rates charged on the basis of schedules rates prevalent at the time.

The Joint Surprise Check further revealed that 10 percent of contractors profit has also been charged by the officers / officials of PHE Sub-Division Bhalwal, Akhnor concerned in laying, dismantling and rethreading of pipes of different diameters in the above mentioned water supply schemes, whereas the work has been executed departmentally.

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The Government of India had sanctioned 2043.63 kilometers of fencing along Indo-Pakistan border out of which 1958.50 kilometers has been completed. Similarly, the Government had approved 2009.52 kilometers of floodlighting along Indo-Pakistan border, out of which 1900.92 kilometers has been completed.

Meanwhile, Mr Shinde said the recent incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir will be overcome shortly as people of the State are in favour of peace.

"There has been little trouble of late, but I am sure it will be controlled soon," he said.

Asked about reports of increased infiltration from across the border, the Home Minister said there were intelligence reports warning about spurt in attempts by terrorists to cross LoC and that were being countered by security forces.

"There have been encounters at the border and our alert forces are thwarting all attempts by terror groups," he said.

To a question on the number of violent incidents being low in Jammu and Kashmir in the post-Afzal Guru hanging period, Mr Shinde said he was thankful to the people of the State in this regard.

"I am grateful to the people of Kashmir for maintaining calm in the valley. At the same time I would like to reiterate that people of Kashmir want peace," he said.

Asked about the fate of the proposed anti-terror body National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Mr Shinde said he as well as his predecessor P Chidambaram had tried their best to evolve a consensus on the issue but failed.

"I have tried. My predecessor had tried. I held two meetings with the Chief Ministers. We have separated (the power to carry out) operations from NCTC but still they (Chief Ministers) did not agree. What else can we do?," he asked.

Asked for his comment on the Supreme Court's order for disqualification of convicted legislators, Mr Shinde said the Government will soon make a statement on the issue.

He said the Centre has asked all States to tighten security in sensitive places as communal elements may try to create trouble ahead of Eid.

"We have told all States to be alert, to be careful. The communal forces may create trouble," Mr Shinde said.

Asked whether he had taken steps for release of jailed Muslim youth accused of terror charges, the Home Minister said he had ordered gathering of information about such youth.

"We are getting information...How many of them are in judicial custody, how many are in police custody, where are they etc., etc. We are working on it," he said.

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Cabinet nod to protect parties from RTI Act

NEW DELHI, Aug 1:

Providing immunity to political parties from Right to Information Act (RTI), the Cabinet today gave its nod to amend the transparency law to keep them out of its ambit by declaring that they are not public authorities.

The Cabinet decision came nearly two months after the Central Information Commission's order of bringing six national political parties—Congress, BJP, NCP, CPI-M, CPI and BSP—under the RTI Act.

The decision to amend the RTI Act was taken during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here, official sources said.

The amendments state that declaring political parties as public authorities under the RTI would "hamper their smooth internal functioning since it will encourage political rivals to file RTI applications with malicious intentions".

They maintain that the Representation of the People Act and the Income Tax Act provide sufficient transparency regarding financial aspects of political parties, it is learnt.

Under Section 2 of the RTI Act, the definition of public authority in the proposed amendment will make it clear that "it shall not include any political party registered under the Representation of the Peoples Act", the sources said.

As proposed earlier, political parties may not be added in the list of organisations (Section 8) exempted from parting information under the information act.

During the Cabinet meeting, some members including Petroleum and Natural Gas minister Veerappa Moily were of the opinion that the people should know that amending the law was not an unilateral move by the Government but was based on consensus among all political parties, they said.

The CIC had in its order on June 3 held that the six national parties have been substantially funded indirectly by the Central Government and were required to appoint Public Information Officers (PIOs) as they have the character of a public authority under the RTI Act.

The decision from transparency watchdog evoked sharp reactions from political parties,

(PTI)

India for cooperative ties with Pak

NEW DELHI, Aug 1:

Sujatha Singh, who assumed charge as Foreign Secretary, today said her immediate priority would be to improve ties with neighbouring countries and asserted that India would like to have a cooperative relationship with Pakistan in a terror-free environment.

"It has always been India's policy to develop peaceful and cooperative relations with Pakistan. Naturally, this presupposes an environment free of violence and of terror," 59-year-old Singh, who was earlier ambassador to Germany, said.

"Dialogue with Pakistan was resumed in 2011. Two rounds have been held since then and we will be picking up the threads. There is a new Government in Pakistan now. We will be picking up the threads from where we left off with the old Government," she told reporters here.

Singh, a 1976 batch Indian Foreign Service officer, moved into her office in the Ministry of External Affairs in South Block. She succeeds Ranjan Mathai and will have a fixed tenure of two years.

Asked about her priorities, Singh said the "immediate neighbourhood" will be high on her agenda besides strengthening relations with strategic partners around the world.

"My immediate priorities would be in our immediate neighbourhood. That is where our immediate interest lies and that is where our most intent interactions are. Beyond that, it is important to strengthen relations with our strategic partners all over the world," she said.

Singh said she would also optimise resources in the MEA and build on the work done by her predecessor.

"I think there is also a good deed to be done here within the Ministry of External Affairs to build on the work done by my predecessor in strengthening the ministry. So, my immediate priority will be to optimize the resources that we already have and to work with all the multiple stakeholders in India's foreign policy," the Foreign Secretary said

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especially Congress which has been credited with bringing in the transparency law but is opposed to the CIC's directive.

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), which acts as nodal department for the implementation of the RTI Act, in consultation with Law Ministry decided to amend the law.

The Government seeks to change the definition of public authorities mentioned under Section 2 of the RTI Act to keep all recognised political parties out of the jurisdiction of RTI, the sources said.

The Government will have to introduce a Bill in this regard in the monsoon session of Parliament beginning Monday, they said.

The Centre's flagship Right to Information Act empowers a citizen to seek time-bound information on all matters of governance by paying a fee of Rs 10.

The Cabinet also gave post-facto approval to official amendments in Whistle-blowers Protection Bill, which seeks to keep information that could compromise strategic and economic interests and impact foreign relations out of the ambit of the proposed law, aimed at protection of whistle-blowers from harassment.

Some official amendments to the Bill, which came up for consideration on August 14 last year in Rajya Sabha, could not be considered as the House was adjourned due to the demise of Union Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh.

The Bill seeks to set up a regular mechanism to encourage people to disclose information on corruption or willful misuse of power by public servants, including ministers.

The Whistle-blowers' Protection Bill, 2012 has already been approved by the Lok Sabha without a debate in 2011.

The Bill also provides for punishment for disclosing the identity of a whistle-blower. It also contains provisions for taking action against whistle-blowers over frivolous complaint of corruption.

As per provisions of the Bill, before closing any complaint of corruption, the competent authority will have to discuss the matter with the complainant. (PTI)

India for cooperative ties with Pak

Singh, who is the third woman to head the services after Chokila Iyer and Nirupama Rao, is the daughter of T V Rajeswar, the former Intelligence Bureau chief.

Asked about a video purportedly showing a Pakistani soldier sharing details of an encounter in which Captain Saurabh Kalia was killed, Singh said India has been taking up the issue with Pakistan.

"We strongly condemn any treatment with our Indian soldiers that is not in line with the Geneva Convention. This is precisely why the issue has been repeatedly taken up starting with Jaswant Singh with his then counterpart Sartaj Aziz. It was also raised in Geneva and we have been continuously taking it up with the Pakistani government.

"If there are some new facts that have come to light, we will assess them and then we will decide on how to proceed further in taking this up," said Singh.

Replying to a question over withdrawal of subsidy on kerosene and cooking gas to Bhutan and its impact on bilateral relations, Singh said India was working closely with the new Government in Bhutan. She said Bhutan will be the first country she will visit as Foreign Secretary.

"As we know India and Bhutan share a unique relationship which has always been characterised by mutual trust and confidence. We are working closely with the new government of Bhutan to continue to consolidate our privileged partnership," she said, adding that "unfortunate technical lapse" resulted the situation.

Singh said Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh has invited his Bhutanese counterpart to visit India.

"You are also aware that our Prime Minister has invited Bhutanese Prime Minister to visit India and I will be visiting Thimpu and when I am there I will consult with our Bhutanese friends on how we can work towards an early visit of Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay to India," said Singh. (PTI)

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